

apuntes

Reflexiones teológicas desde el margen hispano

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**Calvin or Calvinism:
Reclaiming Reformed Theology for the
Latin American Context**

Ruben Rosario

Book Review

C. Michael Hawn

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Apuntes

Theological Reflections from the Hispanic margin

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From the Editor

This issue offers us an opportunity to explore a more lengthy theological exploration of two topics that are not often thought of together. While I believe it is possible to do so, we typically do not associate reformed theology and liberation theology. Ruben Rosario, a doctoral candidate at Princeton Theological Seminary and an adjunct instructor at Memphis Theological Seminary tackles this subject by exploring the theology of John Calvin from a perspective that brings him into dialogue with liberation and Hispanic theology. Through his examination of Calvin's writings on social issues, he is able to assist reformed pastors and churches to find ways of engaging in a praxis of social change. By exploring these issues, Rosario opens the door to new possibilities for engaging reformed theology and liberation theology from a new perspective.

Worship and singing are essential to Hispanic congregations, but often we are hard pressed to find resources that can help us to creatively approach them within our traditions. C. Michael Hawn, Associate Professor of Church Music at Perkins School of Theology provides a thorough review of a book that explores these resources within the Caribbean and Hispanic traditions, giving us insights into a wonderful new resource for our churches.

Finally, I would like to encourage our readers, pastors and professors alike, to submit articles and ideas for future articles. *Apuntes* is a journal that thrives on dialogue between the church and the academy, something that is essential to both. Your contributions are essential to this continual dialogue. I look forward to hearing from you during this coming year.

Ruben Rosario

As a theologian shaped by both the Reformed/Calvinist tradition and Latin American liberation theology, I seek to bring these two perspectives together in order to recover valuable, though often neglected, resources within the Reformed tradition vital for articulating a socially transforming ethic. While Calvinism is often identified with middle-class comfort and the political status quo, the theology of John Calvin (1509-64) can provide a useful model for developing a contemporary political theology. And even though Calvin represents a diachronically distant worldview, in which the work of civil government is seen as part of God's unfolding plan for salvation, his theology can be made intelligible to a twenty-first century church struggling for cultural relevance in an increasingly pluralistic and secularized society.

The Reformed tradition, a diverse body emerging from the sixteenth-century union of Zwinglians and Calvinists, has long recognized that the church's social responsibility is an integral aspect of its spiritual mission.² Likewise, liberation theology—a movement that began in Latin America in the late 1960s and early 1970s with parallel African-American liberation movements in the United States—argues that Christians are called to make a preferential option for the poor because in Scripture God acts on behalf of the weak and abused of human history. This reading of Scripture leads the church to make political commitments in solidarity with the oppressed, seeking the historical transformation of oppressive situations and social orders.³ While North American Reformed theologians like Richard Shaull

¹ I would like to thank Dr. Elsie Anne McKee and Dr. Peter J. Paris of Princeton Theological Seminary for their critical comments on earlier drafts of this article.

² For a general history of the Reformed/Calvinist tradition, from its sixteenth-century origins to the height of scholastic orthodoxy, see John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954) and Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002). For an examination of Calvinist social ethics see John H. Leith, *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989) and W. Fred Graham, *The Constructive Revolutionary: John Calvin & His Socio-Economic Impact* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1971).

³ See Arthur F. McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics: Toward an Assessment* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989) for an introduction and critical assessment of this movement and its critics. The most important primary sources of

and Robert McAfee Brown have drawn comparisons between Latin American liberation theology and the sixteenth-century Reformation,⁴ many critics of the Reformed tradition argue that the Calvinist/Reformed tradition has often embraced “the cultural practices of ordered middle- to upper-class life, and in spite of all our announced concern and effort, U.S. Presbyterians tend to exclude from their midst the real presence of those who live within the lower ranges of economic and cultural life.”⁵

Acknowledging the legitimacy of those who criticize John Calvin’s emphasis on redemptive suffering as “world-repressive,”⁶ I will nonetheless argue that a viable model of liberative praxis can be culled from Calvin’s theology and pastoral practice. This study will demonstrate how Calvin allows for the possibility of Christian political resistance by: (1) analyzing his comments on civil government, (2) exploring his understanding of the prophetic role of preaching, and (3) surveying his pastoral work with the victims of poverty and political persecution.

The Reformed Tradition in Latin America: Calvin or Calvinism?

While John Calvin and other church leaders in Geneva generally focused their evangelical efforts close to home—establishing churches in the rural environs near Geneva and supporting the persecuted Protestant churches in France and, to a lesser extent, the rest of Europe—in the 1550s

Latin American liberation theology have been collected by Alfred T. Hennelly, *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), and a systematic presentation of liberation themes has been compiled and edited by Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuría, *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993). Sobrino completed the project after his colleague Ellacuría was martyred for his work as a pastor and educator in El Salvador in 1989.

⁴ See Richard Shaull, *The Reformation and Liberation Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991) and Robert McAfee Brown, *Theology In A New Key: Responding to Liberation Themes* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1978).

⁵ Mark K. Taylor, “Immanent and Prophetic: Shaping Reformed Theology for Late Twentieth-Century Struggle,” in *Christian Ethics in Ecumenical Context: Theology, Culture, and Politics in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 156.

⁶ Ibid, 154. In this article Taylor focuses on John Calvin’s *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* (1541) in order to expand a thesis developed by Nicholas Wolterstorff that the Calvinist Reformed tradition suffers from two failings: (1) an understanding of a just social order that barely tolerates opposing viewpoints, and (2) a recurrent triumphalism that imposes its world-view upon others. See Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983).

Calvin also lent his support to the establishment of a French Huguenot colony in the New World. For a period of about five years, in a region dominated by Catholic conquest, the ministry of Word and sacrament was regularly celebrated in Brazil (near what is now Rio de Janeiro) according to the Genevan rite. Eventually this colony failed and by all accounts Protestantism did not come to exceed 1% of the Latin American population until the 1940s and 1950s. Nonetheless, Protestantism has been a force for cultural change in Latin America, even if only as a marginalized minority population, since the earliest period of conquest and colonization.⁷

In the seventeenth century the Calvinist/Reformed presence in Latin America was limited to the Dutch colony of Pernambuco in north-eastern Brazil, a community distinguished by its religious tolerance of Judaism and Catholicism, in marked contrast to Portuguese-Spanish intolerance which labeled Protestantism heretical enforced ideological and political homogeneity by means of the Inquisition.⁸ It wasn't until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that North American and European missionary efforts established a permanent Reformed presence in Latin America, primarily in the English-speaking Caribbean, but also in Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala, and several other countries. Yet, as Jean-Pierre Bastian has argued, "When missionaries belonging to U.S. Protestant societies began their proselytizing activities, they did not meet with desert and infertile soil."⁹ Countering the thesis that Protestant missions were little more than religious legitimization for United States colonial activity, Bastian demonstrates that when United States imperialism expanded into Latin America after 1860, Protestantism had been a stable presence for more than two decades. Therefore,

la razón de ser de las sociedades protestantes en América Latina durante estas décadas tenía menos que ver con el "imperialismo norteamericano" que con las luchas políticas y sociales internas al continente que resumía en la confrontación entre una cultura política autoritaria y estas minorías que buscaban fundar una modernidad burguesa basada en el individuo redimido de su origen de casta y por

⁷ See Jean-Pierre Bastian, "Protestantism in Latin America," in *The Church in Latin America: 1492-1992*, ed. Enrique Dussel (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 313-50; and *Historia del Protestantismo en América Latina* (Mexico City, Mexico: Casa Unida de Publicaciones S.A., 1990). Also John H. Leith, *Introduction to the Reformed Tradition: A Way of Being the Christian Community*, revised (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1981), 50-3, 58-9.

⁸ Bastian, "Protestantism in Latin America," 314-5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 325.

lo tanto igualado en una democracia participativa y representativa...¹⁰

José Míguez Bonino, while accepting Bastian's hypothesis that the rise of Protestantism as a political and cultural force in Latin America was primarily due to internal factors (namely, the popular yearning for political liberalization), warns that this marriage of convenience between North American missionaries (with their conservative and pietistic spirituality) and Latin American intellectuals (with a more secularist orientation) contained within it certain irreconcilable differences: "I do not think it exaggerated to suspect that here we have a convergence of interests more than a similarity of ideas."¹¹

Still, if Latin American Protestantism once embraced political liberalism, then its more recent history has been characterized by a rigid fundamentalism that is at best apolitical and at worst allied with authoritarian and repressive political regimes. This analysis has been articulated by liberation theologian Rubem Alves, speaking primarily of the Calvinist/Reformed tradition in Brazil, who argues that the characteristic feature of this brand of Protestantism is a complete and total agreement with a series of doctrinal affirmations as a necessary precondition for full participation in the life of the church.¹² Most troubling for Alves is the fact that, at a time when many Protestants in Brazil were becoming involved in movements for social justice and reaching out to like-minded Roman Catholics, the Presbyterian Church of Brazil denounced such efforts as contrary to the gospel and banned from their communion pastors and lay persons involved in struggles for liberation. In fact, when the military regime in Brazil consolidated its power through acts of political repression in the mid-1960s, Protestant churches remained silent (some even openly supported the regime). This analysis of what Alves calls the failure of liberal Protestantism's "utopian project" at the hands of "right-doctrine

¹⁰ Bastian, *Historia del Protestantismo en América Latina*, 187. "the *raison d'être* of Protestant societies in Latin America during these decades had less to do with 'North American imperialism' than with the internal political and social struggles in the continent, which can be summed up as the confrontation between an authoritarian political culture and those minorities that desired a bourgeois modernity grounded in the individual redeemed from his/her caste origin and based on the equality of a participatory and representative democracy."

¹¹ José Míguez Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism: 1993 Carnahan Lectures*. trans. Eugene L. Stockwell (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 4.

¹² See Rubem Alves, *Protestantism and Repression: A Brazilian Case Study*. trans. John Drury and Jaime Wright (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985).

Protestantism" has often been applied *mutatis mutandis* to all of Latin American Protestantism. However, recent studies of Protestantism in Latin America contend that evangelicalism and social/political activism are not as incompatible as Alves suggests.

For example, in the late 1960s sociologist Christian Lalive D'Epinay, analyzing the rapid expansion of Protestantism in Latin America, argued that churches—specifically the Pentecostal branch of Latin American Protestantism—encouraged members to avoid direct involvement in social and political struggles.¹³ According to Lalive D'Epinay the church became a "refuge" from the problems caused by the cultural shift from a traditional agricultural society to a more urban, industrial, and democratic one. Recently, this analysis has been called into question by Richard Shaull and Waldo Cesar who put forth the thesis that Brazilian Pentecostals are increasingly concerned with struggles for social transformation.¹⁴ Taking into account José Míguez Bonino's argument in *Faces of Latin American Protestantism* that Protestantism in Latin America—whether Liberal, Evangelical, or Pentecostal—contains within it aspects of all "three faces,"¹⁵ I contend that a yearning for political and social change exists in all branches of Latin American Protestantism. Only by ignoring those facets of the Calvinist/Reformed tradition that encourage political resistance and empowerment can one define Brazilian Presbyterianism—and by extension the entire Evangelical "face" of Latin American Protestantism—as irredeemably repressive.

As the late Richard Shaull has noted in his introduction to *Protestantism and Repression*, Rubem Alves has written an insightful and accurate description of how the Presbyterian Church of Brazil was transformed by a small number of reactionary leaders from a beacon of utopian hope to a facilitator of political repression. So much so, that "the word 'Presbyterian' now calls to mind the destructiveness of religious fanaticism and repression."¹⁶ Yet, Shaull also observes that "Alves is more interested in understanding how Protestantism has functioned in the past than in showing what it can become in the future."¹⁷ Nowhere in his analysis does Alves explain why the liberation movement within Brazilian Presbyterianism did not survive in any institutional form:

¹³ See Christian Lalive D'Epinay, *Haven of the Masses: A Study of the Pentecostal Movement in Chile* (London, England: Lutterworth Press, 1969).

¹⁴ See Richard Shaull and Waldo Cesar, *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000).

¹⁵ Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism*, chaps. 1-3.

¹⁶ Alves, *Protestantism and Repression*, xi.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, xvii.

Why not? Granted, the suppression was thorough and ruthless. Yet the leadership of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil could do no more than throw those who represented this spirit out of the Church; they could not destroy the movement. In the past, many “heretical” groups have survived and grown under severe persecution. One reason why this movement was destroyed was that its members did not expect nor were they prepared for the drastic steps that were taken against them. They had no strategy worked out for the survival of their communities...¹⁸

This investigation wants to explore the possibility of developing just such a strategy for the Latin American context by mining the rich theological resources of the Reformed tradition—specifically the theology and pastoral practice of John Calvin—in order to empower communities of resistance in their struggles both within the church and in the broader civil society.

There is, without question, a Calvinist presence in Latin America. How influential John Calvin himself has been in the formation of Latin American Protestantism remains an open question. While a cursory reading of Latin American Calvin literature suggests that few of Calvin’s works, except for the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, have been translated into Spanish,¹⁹ a recent history of fundamentalist Protestantism in Latin America contends that the theology of John Calvin is foundational for understanding most forms of contemporary Protestantism:

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Cipriano de Valera, best known for the revised edition of Casiodoro de Reyna’s Spanish translation of the Bible (1602), translated the 1559 edition of Calvin’s *Institutes* into Spanish in 1597. However, most of the available current literature cites either the English translation of Calvin’s commentaries or the original Latin texts, which suggests that the non-specialist and/or lay person in Latin America has had limited access to the theology of John Calvin. (While it is beyond the scope of the current investigation I am currently researching the dissemination and reception of John Calvin’s theology in Latin America in order to conclude this point with certainty.) Aristómeo Porras, professor of theology at the Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano in Costa Rica, confirms the minimal influence of Calvin’s theology in Latin America while arguing that Calvin and Calvinism were central to the development of the modern democratic state in Latin America, citing several important and influential Latin American political science texts that acknowledge the generative role of Calvin’s *Institutes*. See Porras, “Calvino y la Cultura Occidental” in *Calvino Vivo: Libro conmemorativo del 450 Aniversario de la Reforma en Ginebra*. ed. Samuel Trinidad B. (Coyoacán, México: Publicaciones El Faro, S.A. de C.V., 1987), 149-57.

Por calvinismo se entiende no solo el sistema teológico elaborado por el propio Juan Calvino (1509-1564), sino también los impulsos nacidos de su teología, los cuales constituyen hasta hoy la base doctrinal de la Iglesia Reformada, pero también, con ligeras variaciones, la base de otras tradiciones e iglesias como la anglicana, las metodistas y las bautistas. Así, pues, el calvinismo no se identifica con ninguna denominación o confesión, sino es un sistema de pensamiento que sirve de base a todo el protestantismo y ha sido elemento esencial en la estructuración cultural y social de los países protestantes.²⁰

Consequently, it is safe to conclude that the John Calvin known in Latin America is a mediated Calvin—more Calvinist than Calvin—filtered through the doctrinal orthodoxy encapsulated by the Synod of Dort (1618) and imported via Anglo-American missionary efforts. Ironically, one thing both ideological extremes within Latin American Protestantism (fundamentalism and liberation theology) have in common is that neither has undertaken a direct and thorough critical analysis of John Calvin's theology, especially his writings addressing the church's transformative role in civil society. Turning the potential contribution of Calvin's theology to the contemporary Latin American situation, I contend that the Evangelical "face" of Latin American Protestantism can learn much from John Calvin about integrating doctrinal purity with emancipatory praxis.

Salatíel Palomino López, Reformed theologian and church leader in the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, reminds us that a very important aspect of the Calvinist/Reformed ethos is the church's ability to continually readjust to particular historical and cultural contexts:

Queda bien claro que no podemos caer en el error de vivir solazándonos en las glorias del pasado. No se trata, por otro

²⁰ Florencio Galindo, *El Protestantismo Fundamentalista: Una experiencia ambigua para América Latina* (Navarra, España: Editorial Verbo Divino, 1992), 107. "By Calvinism I refer not only to the theological system elaborated by John Calvin (1509-1564) himself, but also to those streams of thought originating in his theology which today constitute the doctrinal foundation of the Reformed churches as well as the foundation of other traditions and churches (with slight variations) like the Anglicans, Methodists and Baptists. Accordingly, Calvinism is not identified with any single denomination or confession, but with a system of thought that serves as the foundation for all Protestantism and has been an essential element in the cultural and social development of Protestant nations."

lado, de repeticiones estériles o imitaciones grotescas de experiencias ya superadas. No. Se trata de revalorar lo que somos, de un re-encuentro con el espíritu dinámico de nuestra identidad histórica para realizar los necesarios movimientos y reajustes pertinentes a nuestra situación y a nuestro contexto....O sea que estamos ante la demanda de dar cumplimiento a esta esencial cuestión del espíritu del calvinismo: la reforma permanente de la iglesia por medio de la obediencia a la Palabra de Dios y al Espíritu Santo. Lo cual, en nuestro caso, exige muchas reivindicaciones, muchas correcciones en la orientación de nuestra vida eclesiástica, muchos arrepentimientos, muchas conversiones, mucha reflexión sobre el sentido de nuestra vida denominacional y de los necesarios cambios de actitud y de actividad.²¹

López appeals to the sixteenth-century Reformation slogan, *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*, in order to challenge the kind of narrow and exclusionary “right-doctrine Protestantism” so accurately described and denounced by Rubem Alves while suggesting that the way forward for Latin American Presbyterianism might lie in its Calvinist past, specifically in the Christocentric theology of John Calvin himself.

Calvin on Civil Government

Many victims of political oppression have failed to find a liberating voice in Calvinist theology—not just in Brazil as discussed above—but also in South Africa where the Reformed church, until very recently, supported apartheid policies. Given the fact that Calvin’s theology was conceived in exile and addressed the many social problems confronting sixteenth-century

²¹ Salatiel Palomino López, “Herencia Reformada y Búsqueda de Raíces” in *Calvino Vivo: Libro conmemorativo del 450 Aniversario de la Reforma en Ginebra*, ed. Samuel Trinidad B. (Coyoacán, México: Publicaciones El Faro, S.A. de C.V., 1987), 102-3. “It is clear that we [the church] cannot make the mistake of resting on past glories. We can neither simply repeat by rote nor crudely imitate past accomplishments. No. What we are called to do is reassess who we are, re-encountering the dynamic spirit of our historical identity, in order to realize the necessary changes and readjustments pertinent to our current situation and context....Or, in other words, we are faced with the demand of fulfilling this matter essential to the spirit of Calvinism: the constant reform of the church by means of obedience to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Which, in our case, demands many justifications, many corrections to the orientation of our ecclesiastical life, many acts of repentance, many conversions, much reflection about our sense of denominational life and the necessary changes of attitude and action.”

Geneva, such as population dislocation and urban poverty, a critical retrieval of John Calvin's theology will reveal its character as a public theology concerned with social transformation on behalf of the poor and oppressed.

While John Calvin's views had a revolutionary effect on both church and society he is not a social revolutionary in the modern sense. On the contrary, by repeatedly stressing upon Christians the duty of obedience to magistrates, Calvin gives the impression of being a social conservative. According to Calvin, God's will is worked out in history to overcome the abuses of intolerable governments:

The reason why we ought to be subject to magistrates is, because they are constituted by God's ordination. For since it pleases God thus to govern the world, he who attempts to invert the order of God, and thus to resist God himself, despises his power; since to despise the providence of him who is the founder of civil power, is to carry on war with him.²²

Calvin even demands submission to the most tyrannical of human governments, cautioning the victims of political persecution that "if the correction of unbridled despotism is the Lord's to avenge, let us not at once think that it is entrusted to us, to whom no command has been given except to obey and suffer."²³ Given that as subjects it is not the people's duty to topple tyrants, "only this remains, to implore the Lord's help, in whose hand are the hearts of kings, and the changing of kingdoms."²⁴ John Calvin's counsel to the victims of political oppression—patience and prayer—amounts to passive acceptance of an unjust situation, a view rejected by liberationists who prefer more active resistance to repression.

Nevertheless, before dismissing Calvin as a theological resource for liberation movements, it is important to have a better understanding of the context in which he gave this advice. The words quoted above from the *Institutes* reflect conditions in France at the time they were written (1535), when Protestants were "cruelly tormented by a savage prince," "greedily despoiled by one who is avaricious," and "vexed for piety's sake by one who

²² John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. XIX. Reprint of the Edinburgh Edition, various editors and translators (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, reprinted 2003), 478-9 (Romans 13:1). A note on language: throughout the text every effort is made to use gender inclusive language but quotations are left exact in order to preserve the author's original intent or bias.

²³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. ed. Ford Lewis Battles and John T. McNeill (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1960), 4.20.31.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.20.29.

is impious and sacrilegious.”²⁵ These socio-political circumstances need to be considered when reviewing Calvin’s advice. Calvin’s words imploring them to persevere and pray for divine intervention against human cruelty should not be seen as justification for moral passivity, since this is advice given to “subjects” with little political power and is best understood as pastoral concern for the politically powerless. In a country where subjects lived under the authority of an absolute monarch who—in spite of political alliances with the Protestant Princes of Germany—was a defender of Catholic orthodoxy, the Reformed churches in France were persecuted as heretical. While in 1525 fewer than a dozen cities had held heresy trials, by 1540 every region of France had conducted them, with the number of trials increasing steadily every decade through 1560. The intensification of visible persecution of Protestants during the second half of the 1540s prompted the first of several waves of refugees fleeing to Geneva, and the writings of John Calvin were consistently the most frequently cited in the French index of prohibited books.²⁶ Consequently, Calvin’s advice to the Protestant subjects of Francis I was tempered by pastoral concern for their well-being in the midst of persecution...given their situation, a popular uprising would be quickly and violently quelled.

On October 18, 1534, members of the Protestant minority publicly posted copies of a handbill containing crude attacks on the Catholic mass (the Affair of the Placards).²⁷ This move so angered Francis I—a copy of these articles had been posted on the door of the king’s own bedchamber!—he proclaimed that anyone found concealing the person or persons responsible for posting the placards would be burned at the stake. Many were imprisoned and executed in the aftermath of this incident and the king’s attitude toward his Protestant subjects became decidedly hostile. The prefatory letter to Francis I of France found in the 1536 edition of the *Institutes* was written as an *apologia* on behalf of the persecuted French Protestant minority accused of heresy and sedition. Fearful that the Protestant cause would be discredited, especially after the brutal end to the 1535 Anabaptist revolution in Münster,²⁸ John Calvin pleads with the king for

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ For a concise history of the clandestine Reformed churches in France see Philip Benedict’s discussion of the construction and defense of a minority church in *Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed*, 127-48.

²⁷ For a brief summary of the Affair of the Placards see Bernard Cottret, *Calvin: A Biography*, trans. M. Wallace McDonald (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 82-88.

²⁸ See Benedict, *Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed*, 66-7; Williston Walker, Richard Norris, David W. Lotz, and Robert Handy, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th edition. (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1985), 455-65; also

understanding: "So that no one may think we are wrongly complaining of these things, you can be our witness, most noble King, with how many lying slanders it is daily traduced in your presence."²⁹ Arguing that "falsehoods, subtleties, and slanders" have been spread by the enemies of French Evangelicals, Calvin demands toleration and official protection for the agents of ecclesial reform. It is not known whether Francis I ever read Calvin's letter (his policies toward Protestants did not change significantly) but it serves as a statement of the Reformed/Calvinist view of the relationship between church and state.

Much of what John Calvin says concerning civil government was written in polemical opposition to either, Radical and Anabaptist reformers who advocated complete withdrawal from the unregenerate world, or the Roman Catholic establishment under which princes were subject to ecclesial authority. Also underlying this entire discussion is Calvin's agreement with the common Protestant view on "the priesthood of all believers" (1 Peter 2:9), which gave higher status to princes than had been traditional in Roman Catholic theology while encouraging the leveling of all ranks in civil society. Nonetheless, in the prefatory letter to Francis I (written in 1536), it is the more radical wing of the Reformation that Calvin sees as undermining France's Protestant movement vis-à-vis the governing authorities.

The general position of Radical and Anabaptist reformers concerning church and state is encapsulated in the *Confession of Schleithem*, whose fourth article reads: "We have been united concerning the separation that shall take place from the evil and wickedness which the devil has planted in the world...that we have no fellowship with them in the confusion of their abominations."³⁰ Article six, concerning the state's use of coercive power, rejects any involvement in civil government for "it does not befit a Christian to be a magistrate: the rule of the government is according to the flesh, that of the Christian according to the spirit."³¹ Thus, Calvin is quick to distance the French Evangelicals from the more radical reformers who advocated complete separation from (even disobedience to) the state:

...we are unjustly charged, too, with intentions of such a sort that we have never given the least suspicion of them. We are, I suppose, contriving the overthrow of kingdoms—we, from

Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: Reformation of the Church and Dogma (1300-1700)*. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 313-22.

²⁹ Calvin, "Prefatory Address to King Francis," in *Institutes*, 10.

³⁰ Michael Sattler, "Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles," in *The Legacy of Michael Sattler*. trans. and ed. John H. Yoder (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), 37-8.

³¹ Ibid, 40.

whom not one seditious word was ever heard; we, whose life when we lived under you was always acknowledged to be quite and simple; we, who do not cease to pray for the full prosperity of yourself and your kingdom, although we are now fugitives from home!³²

Aside from the prefatory letter (which appeared in all editions of the *Institutes*), additional discussions on civil government are found in chapters 3.19 and 4.20 of the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*.³³ The former chapter, on "Christian Freedom," is concerned with the conscience of the individual believer while the latter, on "Civil Government," deals primarily with the duties of citizens and magistrates. In the 1559 edition these two passages seem unrelated, yet in the 1536 edition they were closely linked, separated only by a section on ecclesiastical power. Given that the final edition of Calvin's *Institutes* is five times its original size, it is important to remember the original relation between these two chapters and to resist the temptation to read Calvin's discussion of civil government in the closing chapter of the final edition as an afterthought. Rather, responsible citizenship is an inherent part of Calvin's notion of the Christian life.

According to Calvin, in contrast with the Anabaptists, Christian theology must address the question of civil government since it is God who founds the state and defines its jurisdiction and purpose:

...civil government has as its appointed end, so long as we live among men, to cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to defend sound doctrine of piety and the position of the church, to adjust our life to the society of men, to form our social behavior to civil righteousness, to reconcile us with one another, and to promote general peace and tranquility. All of this I admit to be superfluous, if God's Kingdom, such as it is now among us, wipes out the present life. But if it is God's will that we go as pilgrims upon the earth while we aspire to the true fatherland, and if the pilgrimage requires such helps, those who take these from man deprive him of his very humanity. Our adversaries claim that there ought to be such great perfection in the church of God that its government should suffice for law.

³² Calvin, "Prefatory Address to King Francis," 30.

³³ Another relevant discussion is found in *Institutes* 4.11.1-5 in which Calvin, discussing the power of the keys (Matthew 16:17-19), demarcates ecclesiastical and civil jurisdictions in marked contrast to the Roman church.

But they stupidly imagine such a perfection as can never be found in a community of men.³⁴

Because of sin and the Fall, God has ordained civil government to serve two purposes: "it provides that a public manifestation of religion may exist among Christians, and that humanity may be maintained among men."³⁵ To this end, temporal governments are granted the power of the sword, i.e., the authority to use coercion to enforce its laws. In effect, God has ordained the secular order (the state) to maintain peace and justice in the world, by force if necessary, with the understanding that the spiritual government (the church) is "already initiating in us upon earth certain beginnings of the Heavenly Kingdom, and in this mortal and fleeting life affords a certain forecast of an immortal and incorruptible blessedness."³⁶

According to Calvin, Christ himself declares "that there is no disagreement between his kingdom and political government or order."³⁷ Therefore, while throughout Calvin's discussion on civil government a distinction is maintained between the spiritual and temporal realms, they are two aspects of a single "twofold government." While the spiritual "resides in the soul or inner man and pertains to eternal life" and the temporal is concerned with the "establishment of civil justice and outward morality,"³⁸ there is no inherent conflict between them. Thus, unlike the modern separation of church and state, in Calvin's theology these two realms interpenetrate each other as manifestations of the one divine will. Beginning about 1560 and continuing over a thirty-year period, the Protestant Reformation in France gave rise to the wars of religion. While Protestants endured much at the hands of a Catholic government, Calvin did not support revolutionary activities; his theological writings reflect great care and effort to prevent social unrest and disorder. Accordingly, each realm in Calvin's twofold government has clearly demarcated jurisdictions: the temporal government makes laws which maintain the social order while the spiritual government enforces discipline of church members. Not only is Calvin's position a contrast to Anabaptist separatism, it also opposes the sixteenth-century Roman Catholic view that the (visible) church is the highest authority. While recognizing a distinction between the spiritual and temporal realms, Calvin recognizes both jurisdictions as religious callings. In fact, the vocation of "magistrate" is for Calvin a holy calling, "not only holy and lawful before God, but also the most sacred and by far the most honorable of

³⁴ Calvin, *Institutes* 4.20.2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.20.3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.20.2.

³⁷ Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. XVIII., 209 (John 18:36).

³⁸ Calvin, *Institutes* 4.20.1.

all callings in the whole life of mortal men.”³⁹ Consequently, the question for Reformed/Calvinist theology is *not* whether the church has the right to enter the public arena or exert political influence. Rather, the question becomes *how, and to what end?*

Governance is a high-calling with great responsibility, and Calvin repeatedly stresses the responsibilities of rulers toward their subjects, while remaining steadfast about the obedience subjects owe their rulers, “whatever the may be like.”⁴⁰ Conversely, magistrates—even absolute monarchs—are subject to the teaching and discipline of the church as members of the one body.⁴¹ Hence, Calvin exhorts magistrates to remain faithful to God’s commands:

For what great zeal for uprightness, for prudence, gentleness, self-control, and for innocence ought to be required of themselves by those who know that they have been ordained ministers of divine justice? How will they have the brazenness to admit injustice to their judgment seat, which they are told is the throne of the living God? How will they have the boldness to pronounce an unjust sentence, by that mouth which they know has been appointed an instrument of divine truth? With what conscience will they sign wicked decrees by that hand which they know has been appointed to record the acts of God? To sum up, if they remember that they are vicars of God, they should watch with all care, earnestness, and diligence, to represent in themselves to men some image of divine providence, protection, goodness, benevolence, and justice.⁴²

Implicit in this warning is the belief that the second purpose of civil government is the use of its (God-given) power “to restrain the sinful

³⁹ Ibid, 4.20.2.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 4.20.29.

⁴¹ See David Willis-Watkins, “Calvin’s Prophetic Reinterpretation of Kingship,” in *Probing the Reformed Tradition: Historical Studies in Honor of Edward A. Dowey, Jr.* ed. Elsie Anne McKee and Brian G. Armstrong (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 116-34, for an investigation of Calvin’s mature understanding of the office of king focusing on sermons on 2 Samuel. Willis-Watkins argues that Calvin preached on David as king in order to present a prophetic reinterpretation of kingship in which no earthly king can be viewed as legitimate who hampers the preaching of the Word; such a king would be overthrown by God and replaced by one who “hears and obeys the prophetic Word” (125).

⁴² Ibid, 4.20.6.

tendencies of the strong to take advantage of the weak, and to secure a certain measure of social justice in human transactions,"⁴³ a point consonant with liberation theology's preferential option for the poor. However, given his emphasis on patient endurance, liberation theology is correct to question whether or not Calvin's instruction is sympathetic to the task of enabling the historical transformation of an oppressive social order.

Considering the turbulent times in which he lived, and the atrocities committed against the French Protestant minority (Calvin himself fled France in 1536 never to return), the following passage from the 1536 edition of the *Institutes* accentuates the importance Calvin placed on subjects obeying their rulers:

Therefore, if we are cruelly tormented by a savage prince, if we are greedily despoiled by one who is avaricious or wanton, if we are neglected by a slothful one, if finally we are vexed for piety's sake by one who is impious and sacrilegious, let us first be mindful of our own misdeeds, which without doubt are chastised by such whips of the Lord [cf. Dan. 9:7]. By this, humility will restrain our impatience. Let us then also recall this thought to mind, that it is not for us to remedy such evils; that only this remains, to implore the Lord's help, in whose hand are the hearts of kings, and the changing of kingdoms [Prov. 21:1].⁴⁴

While Calvin repeatedly stresses that Christians have the duty of obedience to magistrates as "vice-regents" of God—even demanding obedience to tyrannical rulers—there is for Calvin the possibility of legitimate Christian resistance to unjust states:

But in that obedience which we have shown to be due the authority of rulers, *we are always to make this exception, indeed to observe it as primary, that such obedience is never to lead us away from obedience to him*, to whose will the desires of all kings ought to be subject, to whose decrees all their commands ought to yield, to whose majesty their scepters ought to be submitted. And how absurd would it be that in satisfying men you should incur the displeasure of him for whose sake you obey men themselves!⁴⁵

⁴³ Guenther H. Haas, *The Concept of Equity in Calvin's Ethics*. (Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 108.

⁴⁴ Calvin, *Institutes* 4.20.29.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 4.20.32 (emphasis added).

An apparent inconsistency runs through Calvin's understanding of church-state relations. On the one hand, it is not the role of subjects to overturn the rule of a tyrannical government for God will vindicate, but on the other hand, it seems that Calvin does urge (some) resistance to the state when it contradicts the will of God, since "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

How are faithful Christians to withstand the rule of impious despots?

Calvin suggests different options are available to different Christians—depending on what role they serve in the social order. In the passage above Calvin is addressing "those who have been put under the power of others," yet in the section immediately following Calvin acknowledges that God sometimes "raises up open avengers from among his servants, and arms them with his command to punish the wicked government and deliver his people, oppressed in unjust ways, from miserable calamity."⁴⁶ Calvin appears conflicted on this issue—desiring a stable social order (even at the cost of innocent suffering)—yet affirming that God acts in history to overcome tyranny. A crucial hermeneutical key for understanding Calvin's statements on political resistance depends upon recognizing to what audience his comments are directed. He is speaking to private individuals when he warns "if the correction of unbridled despotism is the Lord's to avenge, let us not at once think that it is entrusted to us, to whom no command has been given except to obey and suffer."⁴⁷ However, when addressing the lawfully appointed magistrates of the people, Calvin burdens them with the duty of restraining the abuses of kings and tyrants:

I am so far from forbidding them to withstand, in accordance with their duty, the fierce licentiousness of kings, that, if they wink at kings who violently fall upon and assault the lowly common folk, I declare that their dissimulation involves nefarious perfidy, because they dishonestly betray the freedom of the people, of which they know that they have been appointed protectors by God's ordinance.⁴⁸

Calvin urges constitutional magistrates to protect the liberties of the people through political means. This controversial passage, along with the explicit warning in the closing paragraph of the *Institutes* that obedience to earthly rulers must not become disobedience to God, provides the Reformed tradition with the basic tools for political resistance. Calvin never condoned

⁴⁶ Ibid, 4.20.30.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 4.20.31.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

political revolution, but in his works we find the theological foundations for resisting injustice and oppression.

The Prophetic Role of the Pastor in Civil Society

If the majority of believers are called to be obedient subjects, with patience and prayer their only means of political resistance, and a smaller number are set above them as magistrates, responsible for the just administration of human society and granted corresponding power, we cannot forget that an even smaller number is called to wield the power that stands in judgment of all: the Word of God. John Calvin accords preaching an exalted place in the church's ministry, and from the pulpit, pastors exercise great power for shaping the life of church and society.

The *Institutes of the Christian Religion* begins with a philosophical statement of purpose:

"Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."⁴⁹ Exploring this point further, Calvin concludes "it is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinize himself."⁵⁰ Whatever knowledge of God we derive from nature is distorted by human sin; true knowledge of God is found only in the Scriptures, and always mediated by Christ, for we need God "to take away all cause for enmity and to reconcile us utterly to himself, he wipes out all evil in us by the expiation set forth in the death of Christ; that we, who were previously unclean and impure, may show ourselves righteous and holy in his sight."⁵¹ It is in Scripture that we encounter the divine visage, and through the inward action of the Holy Spirit, receive salvific knowledge of God:

Just as old or bleary-eyed men and those with weak vision, if you thrust before them a most beautiful volume, even if they recognize it to be some sort of writing, yet can scarcely construe two words, but with the aid of spectacles will begin to read distinctly; so Scripture, gathering up the otherwise confused knowledge of God in our minds, having dispersed our dullness, clearly shows us the true God. This, therefore, is a special gift, where God, to instruct the church, not

⁴⁹ Ibid, 1.1.1.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 1.1.2.

⁵¹ Ibid, 2.16.3.

merely uses mute teachers but also opens his own most hallowed lips.⁵²

If, as the Scriptures disclose, the Word of God is revealed by preaching, we must acknowledge as God's will that today the Word is heard in the same way, "through the word of a man [sic], a preacher of the Gospel, called and appointed by God to this task."⁵³

Undoubtedly social, political, and cultural factors shaped Calvin's theology, yet his approach is generally described as a *biblical* theology insofar as he attempts a faithful exegesis of the whole of Scripture: "It is well known that Calvin shared the sixteenth-century Protestant determination to be a faithful teacher of scripture, eschewing all human invention."⁵⁴ Therefore, when Calvin's practical theology focuses on matters of social justice and economic equity it can be assumed that this theme is essential to the biblical message. In an extensive commentary on Psalm 82:3, Calvin's views on poverty resonate with liberation theology's demand that the church serve as an advocate on behalf of the poor and powerless with the powers that be:

We are here briefly taught that a just and well-regulated government will be distinguished for maintaining the rights of the poor and afflicted. By the figure synecdoche, one part of equitable administration is put for the whole; for it cannot be doubted that rulers are bound to observe justice towards all men without distinction. But the prophet, with much propriety, represents them as appointed to be the defenders of the miserable and oppressed...The end, therefore, for which judges bear the sword is to restrain the wicked, and thus to prevent violence from prevailing among men, who are so much disposed to become disorderly and outrageous...From these remarks, it is very obvious why the cause of the poor and needy is here chiefly commended to rulers; for those who are exposed an easy prey to the cruelty and wrongs of the rich have no less need of the assistance and protection of magistrates than the sick have of the aid of

⁵² Ibid, 1.6.1.

⁵³ Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1982 [reprint 1997]), 83.

⁵⁴ Elsie Anne McKee, "Exegesis, Theology, and Development in Calvin's *Institutio*: A Methodological Suggestion," in *Probing the Reformed Tradition: Historical Studies in Honor of Edward A. Dowey, Jr.* ed. Elsie Anne McKee and Brian G. Armstrong (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 155.

the physician. Were the truth deeply fixed in the minds of kings and other judges, that they are appointed to be the guardians of the poor, and that a special part of this duty lies in resisting the wrongs which are done to them, and in repressing all unrighteous violence, perfect righteousness would become triumphant through the whole world.⁵⁵

Granted, there are crucial differences between liberation theology's "preferential option for the poor" and Calvin's biblical vision of "perfect righteousness"—perhaps the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries are working with vastly different notions of what constitutes a "just" human society—yet both share "common places" since their views of justice originate in the world of the Old and New Testaments.

Whereas liberation theology struggles to achieve a truly egalitarian social order, Calvin accepts a rigid social hierarchy in which most are called to be obedient subjects while a select few are called to be benevolent rulers. And while some liberation theologies have gone so far as to advocate revolutionary violence to overcome oppression, Calvin offers little practical advice on what to do when the powerless suffer because rulers are unfaithful in their God-appointed duties. So perhaps Mark Taylor is correct in suggesting that there is "a deep-running fault beneath the mountainous range of Calvinist social piety" which equates social justice with "good order," thereby excluding those outside "the dominant order of things."⁵⁶ However, it cannot be denied that Calvin placed the needs of the poor in sixteenth-century Geneva in the forefront of his efforts at ordering political and ecclesial life. While it is tempting to view systematic attempts at constructing and perpetuating certain social structures with postmodern suspicion, contemporary Reformed theology should be mindful of the fact that in spite of a single-minded "will-to-order," John Calvin does not avoid Scripture's demand to act for justice at great cost to ourselves. An analysis of how the Word of God—primarily through prophetic preaching—exhorts, judges, and continually reforms public life on behalf of the poor and powerless provides an antidote to the more "repressive" manifestations of the Reformed tradition.

John Calvin's understanding of the preaching office begins with thorough exegetical work of the Old Testament, focusing primarily on the prophets who speak with God's voice and authority: "The word goeth out of the mouth of God in such a manner that it likewise 'goeth out of the mouth' of men; for God does not speak openly from heaven, but employs men as his

⁵⁵ Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. V, 332(Psalm 82:3).

⁵⁶ Taylor, "Immanental and Prophetic," 155-6.

instruments, that by their agency he may make known his will.”⁵⁷ Preaching is so vital for the church that “we ought to be so much affected by it, whenever he (God) speaks by his servants, as though he were nigh to us, face to face.”⁵⁸ Furthermore, preaching serves a dual purpose, revealing God’s will while providing an opportunity for believers to demonstrate their obedience:

But as he did not entrust the ancient folk to angels but raised up teachers from the earth truly to perform the angelic office, so also today it is his will to teach us through human means. As he was of old not content with the law alone, but added priests as interpreters from whose lips the people might ask its true meaning [cf. Malachi 2:7], so today he not only desires us to be attentive to its reading, but also appoints instructors to help us by their effort. This is doubly useful. On the one hand, he proves our obedience by a very good test when we hear his ministers speaking just as if he himself spoke. On the other, he also provides for our weakness in that he prefers to address us in human fashion through interpreters in order to draw us to himself, rather than to thunder at us and drive us away.⁵⁹

Central to Calvin’s ecclesiology is the belief that we are called to live in community as the one body, nurtured by Mother Church through the preaching of the Word, in faithful obedience to those called to lead the church. While affirming the priesthood of all believers, Calvin nonetheless recognizes differing vocations within the body and emphasizes the importance of preaching. Yet, he is quick to admonish pastors—perhaps to keep them humble—that only by an act of the Holy Spirit does the word of the preacher become the Word of God (the same can be said for the receptiveness of the hearer), for “when God separates himself from his ministers, nothing remains in them.”⁶⁰

Thus, it is Christ who speaks through preaching, and preaching the means by which Christ rules the church. In the words of the apostle Paul,

How are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a

⁵⁷ Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. VIII, 172 (Isaiah 55:11).

⁵⁸ Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. XV, 343 (Haggai 1:12).

⁵⁹ Calvin, *Institutes* 4.1.5.

⁶⁰ Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. XV, 630 (Malachi 4:6).

preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!" (Romans 10:14-15, RSV).

Commenting on a line from the prophet Isaiah, "He made my mouth like a sharp sword" (Isaiah 49:2, RSV), Calvin asserts that Christ has "been appointed by the Father, not to rule, after the manner of princes...but his whole authority consists in doctrine, in the preaching of which he wishes to be sought and acknowledged; for nowhere else will he be found."⁶¹ Jesus Christ, through his ministers on this earth, exercises power and authority over the church and the world. However, "as to the Church collective, the sword now put into our hand is of another kind, that of the word and spirit."⁶² Recalling Calvin's discussion of civil government, specifically his claim that the power of the sword is granted (by God) to temporal governments because of human sin, it follows that "the church does not have the power to coerce, and ought not to seek it (I am speaking of civil coercion), it is the duty of godly kings and princes to sustain religion by laws, edicts, and judgments."⁶³

Christ's sword is the preached Word, his scepter the Gospel. Not surprisingly, preaching was at the center of Calvin's activities in Geneva, and his long and arduous relationship with the Council and Consistory of Geneva serves as a model for how the church wields the spiritual sword. From Calvin's successor in Geneva, Theodore Beza, we gain a sense of Calvin's tenure as pastor and teacher:

Besides preaching every day from week to week, usually and as often as he could he preached twice every Sunday; he lectured three times a week on theology; he gave remonstrances in the consistory, and delivered as it were an entire lesson in the conference on Scripture that we call a congregation; and he so closely followed this program without interruption until his death that he never failed once during extreme illness.⁶⁴

John Calvin served a parish much bigger than most modern churches with a far more demanding preaching schedule. Aside from preaching duties, Calvin also instituted weekly "congregations" for the other ministers in Geneva for the purpose of providing instruction in Scriptural exegesis and doctrine:

⁶¹ Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. VIII, 9 (Isaiah 49:2).

⁶² Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. VI, 316 (Psalm 149:9).

⁶³ Calvin, *Institutes* 4.11.16.

⁶⁴ T. Beza, *L'histoire de la vie et mort de Calvin* (1565), OC 21, col. 33. Quoted in Cottret, *Calvin: A Biography*, 288-9.

...it will be expedient that all the ministers, for conserving purity and concord of doctrine among themselves, meet together one certain day each week, for discussion of the Scriptures; and none are to be exempt from this without legitimate excuse...As for those who preach in the villages, throughout the Seigneury, they are to be exhorted to come as often as they are able.⁶⁵

The fruits of his labor survive in the form of the *Institutes* in its various drafts, commentaries on almost every book of the Bible, numerous theological treatises, pastoral correspondence, and forty-four bound volumes of sermons. Over 2,000 sermons were recorded in shorthand, primarily by Denis Raguénier, a professional scribe hired in 1549, but scholars estimate that John Calvin preached over 4,000 sermons in his lifetime. Undoubtedly, during this long tenure, Calvin's preaching presented a challenge to Geneva's politicians.

In fact, Calvin (along with associates Farel and Couralt) was expelled from Geneva for mixing politics with religion. In March of 1538 Calvin was reprimanded for calling the city council "a Council of the Devil" and he and Farel were warned "not to mix themselves in magistracy."⁶⁶ Throughout Calvin's career in Geneva his struggles with the Council centered on the issue of the church's independence from temporal government, specifically over the ban and readmission to the Lord's Supper. During his early years, prior to being exiled in 1538, Calvin was adamant about requiring all citizens of Geneva to swear a Confession of Faith written by Farel. The citizens refused, and the Council registry contains numerous mentions of efforts made to persuade the people to accept the Confession, until Calvin and his pastoral colleagues brought the matter to a climax in 1538 by announcing their intention to refuse the Lord's Supper to those who did not subscribe to the Confession. The Council was firm in denying the pastors the unilateral power to ban and then acted to impose liturgical reforms without informing Calvin, Farel, and Couralt, requiring them to celebrate the sacrament on Easter morning according to this new order. And

⁶⁵ John Calvin, "Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances (1541)," in *John Calvin: Selections from His Writings*. ed. John Dillenberger (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 231. This practice was first codified in 1541 and preserved in the ordinances of 1561.

⁶⁶ Amédée Roget, *Historie du peuple de Genève*, 7 vols. (Geneva, Switzerland: J. Jullien, 1870-83), vol. I, 86-94. Cited by W. Fred Graham in *The Constructive Revolutionary: John Calvin and His Socio-Economic Impact*. (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1971), 60, as an accurate account of the circumstances leading up to the exile of Farel and Calvin taken directly from the Council registry.

had the pastors refused, they would have been prohibited from preaching on Easter morning. Calvin and his colleagues did refuse and proceeded to preach on why administering the sacrament under these conditions would have profaned it, which led the Council to act immediately to dismiss the three preachers and order them to leave the city within three days.

Eventually, once the political climate changed, Calvin was called back to Geneva as preacher. In 1541 he returned to Geneva to continue his struggles for ecclesiastical and political reform unyielding on the conviction that the church alone has the right to excommunicate. His new *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* (1541) provided for the election of a Consistory composed of pastors and lay people whose duties included maintaining the purity of the church:

The elders, as already said, are to assemble once a week with the ministers, that is to say on Thursday morning, to see that there be no disorder in the Church and to discuss together remedies as they are required. Because they have no compulsive authority or jurisdiction, may it please their Lordships, to give them one of their officials to summon those whom they wish to admonish. If anyone refuses with contempt to comply, their office will be to inform their Lordships, in order that remedy be applied.⁶⁷

Still, the ordinances do not clarify who actually has the power of excommunication and readmission—the Consistory or the Council. Eventually, Calvin gained approval for his church order, but not before important changes were made to Calvin's text, including this additional article inserted after the above discussion on the Consistory's right to exercise the ban:

All this is to take place in such a way that *ministers have no civil jurisdiction, nor use anything but the spiritual sword of the Word of God*, as Paul commands them; nor is the Consistory to derogate from the authority of the Seignery or ordinary justice. The civil power is to remain unimpaired. Even where there will be need to impose punishment or to constrain parties, the ministers with the Consistory having heard the parties and used such remonstrances and admonitions as are good, are to report the whole matter to

⁶⁷ Calvin, "Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances (1541)," 241.

the Council, which in their turn will advise sentence and judgment according to the needs of the case.⁶⁸

The power struggle over the right to readmit members to the Lord's Supper continued for many years. The Consistory would bar someone from the Supper and send them to the Council for civil punishment where the Council would hear the Consistory's report, declare a sentence and fine, then assumed that person would be admitted into full communion with the church. Calvin and the other pastors disagreed, insisting that those who were excommunicated had to appear before the Consistory yet again, in order to establish their genuine repentance. Then, and only then, would they be readmitted to the Supper, regardless of any decision reached by the civil court.

John Calvin faced great opposition over the right to ban, and on this and other matters the Council questioned the content of his preaching on numerous occasions because "with great choler [he] preached that the magistracy permits many insolences. Ordered that he should be called before the Council in order to know why he has so preached, and that if there is some insolence in the city, the lieutenant should be commanded to look into it and to do justice concerning it."⁶⁹ Calvin's struggle to establish the church's independence from the Council provides a glimpse of how he used preaching as a means of advocating social reform. In his capacity as pastor and teacher, Calvin concedes that the church has certain obligations vis-à-vis the state. First, Christians ought to pray for the civil government and submit to its legitimate authority. Never, throughout his many disagreements with the Genevan civil authorities, does Calvin sanction rebellion. (Although, as has been demonstrated, Calvin allows for the remote possibility of legitimate rebellion against repressive governments, but only when such resistance is led by lesser magistrates constitutionally appointed to protect the individual liberties of the populace.) Second, the church has a duty to encourage the state to defend the poor and defenseless against the rich and powerful. The church in Geneva battled usury, unemployment, disease, and every manner of economic injustice, in great part because John Calvin preached the Gospel without diluting its message. Since magistrates, just like any member of the body of Christ, are subject to the teaching and discipline of the church, there is an expectation that their public policies will be criticized from the pulpit: "Oppression utters a sufficiently loud cry of itself; and if the judge, sitting on a high watch-tower, seems to take no notice of it, he is here plainly warned,

⁶⁸ Ibid, 242 (footnote 21, emphasis added).

⁶⁹ Ibid, quoting the *Registres du Conseil*, May 21, 1548.

that such connivance shall not escape with impunity.”⁷⁰ Finally, the church is to admonish the state when it acts unjustly.

Drawing upon the prophet Amos (a favorite text among liberation theologians), who warns, “Hear this, you who trample upon the needy, and bring the poor of the land to an end...The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: ‘Surely I will never forget any of their deeds’” (Amos 8:4, 7, RSV), Calvin comments:

But as more guilt belongs always to leaders, this is the reason why the Prophets treated them with more sharpness and severity: for many of the common people go astray through thoughtlessness or ignorances or are led on by others, but they who govern, pervert what is just and right, and then become the originators of all kinds of licentiousness. It is no wonder then that the Lord by his Prophets inveighed so sharply against them.⁷¹

The minister, as the “mouth of God,” is duty-bound to speak out against all injustice and to exhort magistrates to perform their God-ordained tasks with equity and mercy. Calvin thus demonstrates that he wanted a church free from the control of the state, not because he was a megalomaniac wanting to establish himself as “bishop of Geneva” (as some modern critics have suggested), but for the simple fact that—in order to maintain purity of doctrine—the church needs the freedom to preach the Word of God in prophetic criticism of the state. Calvin wielded the spiritual sword with great finesse, persuading political opponents by the truth and righteousness of the preached Word, all the while acting with the certainty that both church and state exist under the Lordship of Christ.

Calvin's Pastoral Praxis

All theological questions have an ethical dimension—i.e., the theological question (who God is) is inseparable from the moral question (what to do)—a point best articulated by Gustavo Gutiérrez whose book, *A Theology of Liberation*, is considered the most important work of Latin American liberation theology. In this seminal work Gutiérrez asserts that theology (talk about God) is a “second moment” implying that there is a “first moment” antecedent to all theological formulation consisting of the

⁷⁰ Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. V, 332 (Psalm 82:3).

⁷¹ Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. XIV, 363-4 (Amos 8:4).

silent language of Christian spirituality, prayer, worship, and moral action.⁷² Methodologically, Latin American liberation theology seems worlds apart from Calvin's naïve attempt to exegete the text while "eschewing all human additions," since Gutiérrez begins by acknowledging the cultural, political, and ecclesial commitment of the theologian and also draws upon the social sciences, as interpretations of reality, to provide theology with some of its "raw" material. However, just because theology employs extra-scriptural tools of analysis does not make these methods the source or locus of theology; liberation theology is not Marxism although at times it has employed Marxist social analysis. By the same token, the fact that Calvin was influenced by humanism and employed its methods in interpreting the Bible does not reduce his biblical and Christocentric theology to mere humanism.

The most important aspect of liberation theology is that it adopts the perspective of the poor and powerless as its starting point when formulating its theology. Liberation theologians do not come to the text with some abstract notion of a preferential option for the poor that they then read into the text; rather, they approach the text as the poor (or as pastors and theologians serving the poor) and find within the text good news for the poor (Luke 4:18). Liberation theology makes a preferential option on behalf of the poor and powerless because in the Scriptures God institutes this preferential option. Gutiérrez identifies three interrelated levels or dimensions of liberation: (1) liberation from oppressive socio-economic structures, (2) liberation as personal transformation, and (3) liberation from sin. Ultimately, however, he recognizes that "only liberation from sin gets to the very source of social injustice and other forms of human oppression and reconciles us with God and our fellow human beings."⁷³ While Calvin does not expressly speak about liberation in this same sense his social ethics emphasize the need for equity in all human relations. Furthermore, both approaches seek to bring about social transformation by means of pastoral care and instruction. For John Calvin and Gustavo Gutiérrez the local congregation is the nexus of moral action and education; from the grassroots level the church reaches out to the broader cultural context, seeking social change by modeling an alternate way of living in community. As Gutiérrez has always maintained, the church wields great power and influence in society and should not be

⁷² See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. and ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988 rev.), 3-12.

⁷³ *Ibid*, xxxviii.

afraid to use this power on behalf of the poor and oppressed.⁷⁴ John Calvin the pastor would agree.

In a sermon on 2 Samuel 8:9-18, Calvin charges all believers, not just Christian magistrates, “to take as strong a stand against evil as we can. This command is given to everyone not only to princes, magistrates, and officers of justice, but to all private persons as well.”⁷⁵ Scripture is clear that as Christians we are called to suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness, and for Calvin such suffering even becomes a source of joy, for “we are too ungrateful if we do not willingly and cheerfully undergo these things at the Lord’s hand.”⁷⁶ Forbearance—especially in defense of the innocent—is an important virtue of the Christian life. In Calvin’s Geneva, countless opportunities to suffer for the sake of righteousness presented themselves.

Geneva was a small city, with an estimated population of 10,000 in 1537, but surging as high as 21,400 in 1560. The first wave of immigration in 1542 (some 5,000 French refugees fleeing political persecution) generated increased poverty, crime, unemployment, and xenophobia. Not only did the ecclesiastical and civic leaders of Geneva face the consequences of breaking with the Roman church, but the deterioration of the medieval social order created new cultural, political, and economic realities which both church and state were ill-prepared to confront.⁷⁷ Because Calvin’s theology and preaching originate in a context of political persecution, extreme poverty, and innocent suffering—a social situation analogous to contemporary liberation efforts in Latin America—it is tempting to judge Calvin’s praxis according to current standards of pastoral care. Yet, while Calvin’s pastoral duties were extremely demanding, they consisted primarily of preaching and teaching. Calvin was not a social worker, political activist, or psychological counselor, roles which the contemporary pastor often dons, yet Calvin was very involved in reorganizing church order and liturgy, in reorganizing the city’s social order properly to meet the needs of the poor and helpless, in defending the autonomy of the church against any infringement by the temporal government, and in maintaining the religious education and doctrinal purity of the faithful.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 76.

⁷⁵ John Calvin, *Sermons on 2 Samuel: Chapters 1-13*. trans. Douglas Kelly (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1992), 419.

⁷⁶ Calvin, *Institutes* 3.8.8.

⁷⁷ For a fuller accounting of the social situation in 16th century Geneva see Graham, *The Constructive Revolutionary*, 97-115; Cottret, *Calvin*, 157-81; Benedict, *Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed*, 93-109; and Elsie Ann McKee, *Diakonia in the Classical Reformed Tradition and Today*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 47-60.

According to Calvin, aside from preaching and teaching, pastoral care is primarily defined as care for the poor and sick. To this end, the church in Geneva established several institutions and practices to provide for the well-being of the disabled and disadvantaged. First and foremost among these is the deaconate, established by Calvin as a permanent ministry of the church. Deacons provide the church's ministry to the suffering of the world; they are responsible for collecting and administering finances for this purpose as well as for the actual care of the needy. In the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* Calvin explains the division of labor within the deaconate: "There were always two kinds [of deacons] in the ancient Church, the one deputed to receive and hold goods for the poor, not only daily alms, but also possessions, rent and pensions; the other to tend and care for the sick and administer allowances to the poor."⁷⁸ Calvin's church order calls for a similar organization to be followed in the administration of public hospitals, with the installment of procurators and hospitallers, and he charges pastors to always inquire after the welfare of the citizenry. Should they find anyone lacking of anything they are instructed to inform the Council so that appropriate action can be taken to remedy the situation.

Not only were the poor of Geneva provided for, but in order to meet the needs of the constant stream of Protestant refugees from Roman Catholic regions, a welfare fund for poor foreigners known as the *Bourse française* was established.⁷⁹ While Geneva's welfare institutions were designed to help those who, through illness or disability, had no hope of becoming self-supporting, most aid was temporary and designed to help the recipient become independent:

The goal of the deacons was apparently to get able-bodied refugees back on their feet as soon as possible, by providing temporary housing, short-term support, and job retraining when necessary. The deacons paid for tools to set up artisans in trade and provided some of them with raw materials...Such relatively modest expenditures could make people financially independent with little outlay, and since

⁷⁸ Calvin, "Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances (1541)," 235-6.

⁷⁹ See Jeannine E. Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare: Deacons and the Bourse française*. (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1989), for a thorough study of this institution and its relation to the rest of the social welfare system in Calvin's Geneva. The author notes that the *Bourse française* is not mentioned in the Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 since the large influx of refugees began shortly thereafter, but the records indicate that sometime in the mid 1540s the need for an alternate welfare program for refugees became apparent and by September 30, 1550 the fund had been officially established.

loans were preferred to handouts, the deacons had an opportunity to recover some of their outlay.⁸⁰

Aside from such immediate welfare needs, John Calvin also made primary education compulsory for boys and girls in Geneva, promoted secondary education for boys and girls, and founded what became the University of Geneva.

Nonetheless, contemporary liberationists still find fault with Calvin's social reforms. The section of the *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* dealing with the church's ministry to the poor ends with a warning against begging "which is contrary to good order."⁸¹ This emphasis on "good order" has raised the criticism that "the middle-class denominations add organization upon organization to meet the needs of the disordered and disinherited, but still the church at best reinforces the distance between the middle-class churches and the churches of the disinherited."⁸² Granted, the social piety arising from Calvin's theology emphasizes good order, but not from a desire to exclude or marginalize the "disinherited" as Taylor and Wolterstorff suggest. Rather, the rigid systematic approach to social welfare concerns demonstrated in Calvin's church order is the inescapable by-product of implementing voluminous social reforms in response to great social upheaval and immeasurable human suffering. A more thorough examination of Calvin's correspondence unmasks the human side of the "world-repressive" social engineer who struggled, often against great odds, to create stability and peace for Geneva.

Calvin's correspondence reveals a pastor who took time to write to political prisoners and refugees, offering comfort, material assistance, and practical advice, while interceding with governing authorities on their behalf. In 1545, when the French victims of royal persecution sought refuge in Geneva, John Calvin was instrumental in convincing the Genevan civil authorities to not only offer safe-haven but to also provide the refugees with means of subsistence.⁸³ Further evidence of Calvin's political advocacy is found in a letter to Farel, dated May 4, 1545, in which Calvin writes for counsel on how to help the persecuted Protestants of Provence:

⁸⁰ Ibid, 39.

⁸¹ Calvin, "Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances (1541)," 237.

⁸² Taylor, "Immanent and Prophetic," 156.

⁸³ For an overview of Calvin's advocacy on behalf of French refugees see Graham, *The Constructive Revolutionary*, 97-115; and Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare*, 29-36. For translations of Calvin's pastoral correspondence and advocacy for justice for the victims of political persecution see John Calvin, *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, ed. and trans. Elsie Anne McKee (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2001), 315-32.

...one of them has returned to us with the melancholy intelligence that several villages have been consumed by fire, that most of the old men had been burned to death, that some had been put to the sword, others having been carried off to abide their doom; and that such was the savage cruelty of these persecutors, that neither young girls, nor pregnant women, nor infants, were spared...On hearing of this dreadful tragedy, and considering what ought to be done, it seemed advisable to the brethren [ministers in Geneva] in the first place, that we should send a man to you with my letter which recommends the cause of all the Churches to the ministers; and in the next place we asked the advice of the [Genevan city] Council, because we were not so clear among ourselves what measures ought to be taken. It was the opinion of the Council that I should go in person to the Swiss Churches [as an ambassador for the people of Provence].

I shall therefore set out tomorrow on the journey...As soon as I can, I shall urge the Senate to grant me an audience of the Council.⁸⁴

Calvin's efforts to liberate political prisoners were not always successful, as in the case of the five theological students imprisoned in Lyons and burned at the stake in 1553, yet his pastoral letters were intended to not only provide comfort to the prisoners but also praise the witness of the Protestant martyrs. This is evidenced in a letter of encouragement addressed to Liner, a Protestant merchant who was working to free the five prisoners of Lyons:

Reflect, moreover, how many worthy brethren there are who glorify God for what you are doing, who would be scandalized if you altered your course. As for the dangers which they set before you, I have no fear of their coming to pass, for the good brethren for whom you have done so much feel themselves so indebted to you that, were they at liberty, far from being cowardly enough to betray you, they would expose themselves to death for your sake...Be of good courage therefore in this holy work, in which you serve not only God and His martyrs but also the whole church.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Calvin, *Writings on Pastoral Piety*, 317-8.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 323.

From reading these letters it becomes evident that John Calvin's understanding of the Christian life does not promise freedom from turmoil and affliction. Rather, Christ's grace comes to us amidst the trials of life, enabling us to not only persevere in faith in spite of our adversities but to also see God's providence in our sickness, imprisonment, and even death. Furthermore, according to Calvin it is the vocation of all Christians to take up "the protection of the good and the innocent against the wrongs of the wicked," even at the cost of undergoing "the offenses and hatred of the world, which may imperil either our life, our fortunes, or our honor."⁸⁶

Conclusion

Liberation theologians have long recognized that every theology is contextual and inevitably intertwined with the interests and desires of a particular culture or social class. The critique of Brazilian Presbyterianism developed by Rubem Alves in *Protestantism and Repression* accurately describes how church leaders compromised the church's mission for the sake of political gain. Nevertheless, his analysis offers little practical guidance to those Protestants within the Latin American context who are seeking a more socially and politically engaged Christianity. According to Alves, the only way to combat "right-doctrine Protestantism" is by embracing doubt and limiting the truth-claims made by theology: "Those who already possess the truth are predestined to become inquisitors. Those who have only doubts are predestined to tolerance and perhaps to burning at the stake. That is why I see only one way out. We must consciously and deliberately reject truth and certainty before they take possession of us."⁸⁷ But there is another way out...an alternative to the version of Reformed/Calvinist Protestantism that came to dominate in Brazil attainable by a return to the very sources of the tradition.

It has been demonstrated how Calvin's theology and pastoral practice sought to create a just and equitable society founded upon his understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But Calvin's methods reflect the rigidly hierarchical society of late-medieval/early-modern Europe, so to modern eyes his efforts at caring for the poor and oppressed can appear paternalistic. Thankfully, not every aspect of Calvin's ordering of church life and society is essential to Reformed theology. What is essential is a faithfulness to the Word of God when defining the church's ecclesiology and missiology. Elsie Anne McKee highlights Calvin's greatest strength as his determination to be faithful to the sole authority of Scripture, allowing all of Scripture to instruct him without skipping inconvenient passages. The

⁸⁶ Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.8.7.

⁸⁷ Alves, *Protestantism and Repression*, 206.

message Calvin finds in Scripture is akin to the fundamental affirmation of liberation theology—that God acts in the world in order to liberate the poor and oppressed, making historical liberation a necessary dimension of salvation—insofar as Calvin understands the Christian life as a call to suffer for the sake of righteousness (*Institutes* 3.8.7).

In sixteenth-century Geneva, Christ's call to minister to the poor, the sick, the orphan, the widow, the refugee, and the prisoner was purposefully integrated into the life of the church and legislated by civil law. In twenty-first century Latin America, liberation theology can transform the character of Protestantism by helping pastors and lay people alike rediscover the Reformed/Calvinist tradition's commitment to socially-transformative praxis. Thus, while always conscious of the fact that the Reformed tradition has at times used its theology to legitimate oppression, the church should nonetheless tread bravely into the public arena, confident that Calvin has already walked that path; more importantly, with the sure knowledge that Christ himself first marked the trail.

Resumen

Como teólogo formado en la tradición calvinista-reformada y en la teología latinoamericana de la liberación, el autor intenta acercar estas dos perspectivas con el fin de recuperar los valiosos recursos, algunas veces negados, de la tradición reformada para articular una ética socialmente transformadora. Aun cuando Calvino representa una cosmovisión distante diacrónicamente, en la cual el trabajo del gobierno civil es visto como parte del plan de Dios para la salvación, su teología puede hacerse inteligible para la iglesia del siglo XXI en su lucha por la relevancia cultural y en medio de una sociedad cada vez más secularizada y plural. Reconociendo la legitimidad de quienes critican el énfasis de Calvino sobre el sufrimiento redentor como mundanamente represivo (world repressive), no obstante argumentaré que puede construirse un modelo viable de praxis liberadora a partir de la teología y de la práctica pastoral de Calvino. Este estudio demostrará cómo Calvino contribuye a la resistencia política cristiana mediante: (1) el análisis de sus comentarios sobre el gobierno civil; b) la exploración de su comprensión del papel profético de la predicación; y c) el estudio de su trabajo pastoral con las víctimas de pobreza y persecución política.

C. Michael Hawn

Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean and Hispanic Perspectives*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. 259 pages. 0-8308-1579-1, \$17.00

Dr. Maynard-Reid is professor of biblical studies and missiology and the vice president for spiritual life and mission at Walla Walla College in College Place, Washington. Jamaican born, he has lived in Puerto Rico and various other parts of the United States as well as Mexico. The author presents an excellent overview of cultural worship traditions that result from the African diaspora and the confluence of African and Latino cultures. While resources are increasingly plentiful on African American worship and music, there are fewer descriptions of Protestant Hispanic worship, Justo González's *¡Alabadle! Hispanic Christian Worship* (Abingdon Press, 1996) being the primary exception, and very little devoted to Caribbean worship. The scope of Maynard-Reid's book is therefore an important contribution to discussions of multicultural worship.

In the opening introduction on culture and worship, I appreciated the author's statement that "Culture is not biological or racial.... Culture is socially learned and assimilated." (p. 17) It is common for some to use the terms "cultural" and "racial" interchangeably. This distinction is especially important when discussing the various cultural manifestations in worship. Worshiping in a particular way is in part a culturally learned experience regardless of race. Worship also is in part the result of historically transmitted traditions. Maynard-Reid is well aware of the historical patterns of worship. He does not present us with a monolithic view of any of the more general traditions that he introduces, but helps us see some of the variations "Because culture is dynamic, worship cannot be static." (p. 19) These assumptions get us off to an excellent start.

Following a brief eleven-page historical overview of worship, the author embarks on a discussion of "Constancy and Diversity" (Chapter 3). His opening sentences let us know that this is not a parochial text: "The Christian church is universal, or catholic. The church is also local. The church's worship is constant as well as diverse" (p. 41). These assertions broaden the parameters. Maynard-Reid finds constancy in four "ageless, universal, common, and core factors" of worship: (1) Gathering with God's people to experience God's presence; (2) Celebrating the seasons of the Christian Year and the sacraments; (3) presenting the Word in scripture,

study, and sermon; and (4) prayer. (p. 43) While holding to these historical constants, he rejects assumptions that Euro-American worship styles are normative or preferable to others. With these assumptions expressed, we embark on a liturgical journey, surveying three rich cultural worship traditions.

Chapter 4, "We Had Church Today!", and the following three chapters on African American music, the spoken word, and African American responses in worship set up a format that he follows generally throughout all of the major sections of the book. This section and the ones on Caribbean worship and Hispanic worship are well documented and carefully researched. The style is readable and accessible, yet thorough and informative. As an example of the level of documentation, I mention several of the authors cited in his section on African-American music, an area with which I am more familiar. He is well aware, for example, of the contributions of James Cone, Melva Wilson Costen, Portia Maulstby, William McClain, Jon Michael Spencer, Eileen Southern, and others. This is representative of his scholarship throughout the book.

The section on Caribbean Worship, "An Adventure of the Spirit," beginning with Chapter 8, is particularly helpful because of the author's experience growing up in Jamaica and because there are fewer materials available in this area. It is impossible to take a monolithic view of Caribbean worship because of its complexity. In the limited space provided, the author introduces us to some of the rich diversity found in music and the response of Caribbean peoples in worship.

I found the section on Hispanic worship, "In the Spirit of a Fiesta," beginning with Chapter 11, to continue with the same quality. The concluding chapter of the book on holistic worship, "Rational and Physical", presents explicitly two aspects of worship that have been threaded throughout the book. I agree, "Worship must recapture the use of the body", (p. 205) bringing into balance the Enlightenment-driven perspective that what is said is more important than what is done. At the same time, Maynard-Reid's love for dance is not an excuse for allowing worship to degenerate into "lit-orgy." (p. 213)

In future research, Maynard-Reid may want to explore the work of the Lutheran World Federation in cross-cultural worship, especially the Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture (1996). I think he would find this model helpful and supportive to his basic approach. In the area of Caribbean worship and music, the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church may offer additional materials. He might enjoy entering into dialogue with Jorge Lockward from the Dominican Republic, now living

in New York, and George Mulrain, a native of Trinidad and Tobago now teaching in Jamaica.

I found this book helpful for pastors and church musicians alike. It could be used in an undergraduate or graduate class on worship as well as a reference tool for a worship committee. I would recommend that Professor Maynard-Reid continue to work in this area, especially in providing us a deeper understanding of his native Caribbean church. I am grateful for this addition to the field of worship and culture.

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